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suggests many questions as to the close relation between the English drama and English vernacular literature, and is by far the most significant portion of Miss Foster's work.

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PROLOGUE TO THE CANTERBURY TALES

His purchas was wel bettre than his rente.

This line, which refers to the disreputable money-winning activities of the Friar, is correctly explained by Skeat (v, 28). "Purchas" means, he says, "proceeds of his begging," and the line, as a whole, then means that "what he acquired in this way (i. e., by "purchas") was greater than his *rent* or income." Skeat, also, quotes as a parallel, *Canterbury Tales*, D, 1451 (IV, 363, in his edition): "My purchas is theeffect of all my rente," spoken by the fiend, who is matching rascalities with the Somnour, and a couplet from the Middle English fragmentary version of the *Roman de la Rose*, the Chaucerian authorship of which has been so much debated, viz:

To winne is always myn entent.

My purchas is better than my rent.

Romaunt of the Rose, 6837.

He quotes, too, the French original of the second line of this couplet, which occurs in Jean de Meung's division of the *Roman de la Rose*: "Miex vaut mes porchas que ma rente" (l. 11760). Skeat's reference is to M. Méon's edition of the French poem (3 vols., Paris, 1814). In the better edition of Francisque Michel (2 vols., Paris, 1864), II, 28, it is numbered 12493. Neither Skeat nor any of the other editors of Chaucer, however, have recognized that this line is not original with Jean de Meung, but a French proverbial expression, which must have enjoyed many centuries of existence. And what is true of the editors of Chaucer is true, also, of the editors of the *Roman de la Rose*. The expression occurs, however, already in a fragmentary Arthurian romance (in octosyllabic couplets), which was discovered only a few years ago and which has been edited by Paul Meyer in *Romania*, XXXIX (1910), 1 ff. under the title of *Enfances Gauvain*. Here, to be sure, the expression is not quite so concise in form, for the poet compels it to supply rimes to the line that precedes and the line that comes after. It runs as follows (*ibid.* p. 27, ll. 344 f. of the Second Fragment):

Et miels me valent mi porcaç

A double que ne fait ma rente.

The unique ms. of the *Enfances Gauvain* dates from about the middle of the thirteenth century—that is to say, from about the

time that Jean de Meung was born—but Meyer, rightly, I believe, assigns (p. 19) the composition of the poem to the beginning of the century. The author shows a marked *penchant* for proverbial expressions, all instances of which in the text, except the one now under discussion, Meyer has commented on.

We do not find the expression in the standard nineteenth century compilations of proverbs, such as the *Sprichwörter der Germanischen und Romanischen Sprachen, vergleichend zusammengestellt* of Ida von Düringsfeld and Otto Freiherr von Reinsberg-Düringsfeld (2 vols., Leipzig, 1872-1875), or Le Roux de Lincy's *Le Livre des Proverbes Français* (2nd edition, 2 vols., Paris, 1859), not to mention less well-known works, but this is what was to be expected, for "pourchas" is obsolete in Modern French, and the locution, naturally, perished with the word. On the other hand, I find it recorded in two eighteenth century collections of proverbs and proverbial expressions, viz., *Dictionnaire des Proverbes Français et des Façons de Parler, Comiques, Burlesques et Familières*, p. 314 (Paris, 1748),—an anonymous work, which was really compiled, however, by A. J. Panckoucke,—and *Dictionnaire Comique, Satyrique, Burlesque, Libre et Proverbiale*, II, 345 (2 vols., Pampe-lune, 1786), by P. J. Leroux. Under "Pourchas" in both of these collections we have the expression under discussion in the following form: "Ses pourchas lui valent mieux que ses rentes."

So far as Chaucer is concerned, he was so familiar with the *Roman de la Rose* that he may very well have derived his line from that source, but the facts which I have just presented make it evident, I think, that he might also have picked up this proverbial phrase in the ordinary social intercourse of the time.

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OLD ENGLISH LEXICAL NOTES

I find in the *NED* sub *eaves* the following remark: "The forms ME. *ove*se, W. Somerset *office* (Elworthy), point to an OE. form **ofes*: = W. Ger. **obas(w)a*." The star affixed to *ofes* indicates that this form is not known to be on record. Now, it is true, none of our OE. dictionaries book *ofes* 'margin,'¹ but for all that it is on record in a grant of Coenwulf, dated A. D. 811, and this grant was as No. 10 available to the lexicographers ever since 1884, when under the auspices of the Ordnance Survey Office Mr. M. Basevi Sanders published the third part of the facsimiles of Anglo-Saxon mss., issued by the said office at Southampton, England. On lines 18-19 of the ms. of Coenwulf's grant as represented by the facsimile

¹ The second edition of John R. Clark Hall's *Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* exhibits only the by-form *ofesc*, 'border.'